

Business Services and Technology Education

(511 IAC 6-7-6 and 511 IAC 6.1-5.1-10.1)

Introduction

Today's business world demands that students leave our schools prepared to meet the needs of employers and colleges. Many people—parents, students, legislators, and even other educators—believe that business technology programs are only for students who expect to pursue a career in business. In reality, however, these programs provide a foundation for success for **all students**, regardless of their ultimate goals in life. Business competencies are required in all professions, not only technical skills but also an understanding of business operations and the social contexts of employment settings that determine how specific skills are applied.

Great strides have been made in the preparation of students for the workplace and post-secondary activities. Business Services and Technology programs have changed dramatically to meet the needs of business today. Training has evolved from primarily clerical/secretarial training to the development of many related skills. Business now expects that persons understand the basic concepts utilized in all positions/professions. Increasingly, more management personnel are responsible for many of the tasks once assumed by a receptionist or secretary, while decision making/problem solving is necessary at all levels. Business Services programs are intended to provide students with situations which will allow them to experience those skills needed to succeed in the career and/or educational endeavors they pursue. Graduates of these programs should be prepared to understand the demands of others, to analyze rapidly changing events, and to formulate responsive, rational, and proactive approaches to decision making.

The Business Services and Technology Programs have been planned to allow students to prepare for careers in business while providing instruction that matches their abilities, interests, and personal qualities. The sequence of learning experiences offered will provide the opportunity for students to achieve their highest level of occupational competency.

Mission Statement For Business Technology Education

The mission of Business Technology Education in Indiana is to work cooperatively with the business community to prepare all individuals to live and work as productive citizens in a changing global society by providing essential business experiences, education, and training that will allow the student to have a greater chance of success in any career.

Business Services and Technology Programs Goals and Strategies for Developing and Maintaining a Total Vocational Business Program for the 21st Century

1. Provide an ever-changing curriculum that is flexible and sensitive to changes in business and technology.
 - Survey businesses to determine workforce needs
 - Utilize local advisory committees to continually update curriculum and content
 - Use content standards and performance expectations from the Indiana Department of Education as guidelines
 - Develop and utilize assessment instruments to determine student accomplishment and the program's effectiveness
 - Use project-based learning activities, such as minibaskets, in-baskets, LAPS (learning activities projects), Internet activities, etc.
 - Provide internships, field experiences, or actual business simulations
 - Review and update curriculum on a regular basis
2. Develop in-school laboratories (or provide actual field experiences in local businesses) that simulate actual business situations.

- Provide comparable equipment and facilities as those found in business
 - Utilize policies and procedures comparable to those used in business
 - Provide actual business activities, such as school-based enterprises, field experiences, etc.
 - Provide business simulations that are comparable to those activities in business
 - Utilize various reference materials such as *Business Services and Technology Teacher's Manual* and *Functional Work Stations Manual*
3. Discover and analyze the manpower needs and employment status of the workforce.
 - Establish and utilize local advisory committees
 - Determine the occupational trends, such as high-demand areas
 - Survey business community employment needs
 4. Provide opportunities for students to earn occupational certificates of proficiency.
 - Award Business Support Services Technical Certificates of Achievement through the Indiana Department of Workforce Development
 - Award local certificates of technical achievement based on state and local competencies
 - Encourage students to complete certification for business/industry, such as Microsoft, Corel, CISCO, Novell, and A+
 - Award certificates of achievement through Business Professionals of America's district, state, and national competitions
 5. Provide meaningful common experiences for students through the vocational student organization, Business Professionals of America.
 - Develop leadership and professionalism through active participation in BPA; e.g., competing at district, state, and national competition
 - Develop social and interpersonal skills through organizational activities, such as social gatherings, cooperating with other student organizations, and working on committees

Business Services and Technology programs should have a broad client base that will become larger and more diverse as time goes on. Business has a major responsibility to complement other fields of occupational education in serving the needs of society and to assist general educators in developing ways to help children and youth explore the world of work. These programs provide training that integrates basic skills, life skills, information technology skills, international business knowledge, and an understanding of lifelong learning.

Who needs these skills? Anyone who:

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| T uses a computer | T will be affected by technology |
| T enters the job market | T seeks solutions to problems |
| T manages one's own personal finances | T enjoys working with people |
| T purchases goods | T is a lifelong learner |
| T dreams of becoming an entrepreneur | |

The fact is, **everyone** can benefit from these programs.

Using the Curriculum Guidelines and Grids

Committees of teachers and educators from across the state of Indiana were formed for each course offering. The members were selected from individuals who are either presently teaching the particular course and/or those who were going to be teaching the course in the near future. These committees met numerous times in an attempt to determine and review the content standards and performance expectations for each course. Members agreed that guidelines such as those that follow are extremely helpful when preparing curriculum, lesson plans, and materials for a particular course. The committees kept in mind and referred to the National Business Education Standards, the ISTEP+ language arts and math competencies, and SCANS in determining actual content standards. It is imperative to point out that these standards and expectations must be reviewed on a continuous basis both at the local and the state levels and changed as student needs, business needs, technology change.

The information that follows for each of the courses offered in Business Technology Education is intended to be used as guidelines in planning and presenting materials to students. The guides are not to be considered “absolutes” or “dictates.” Rather, the guidelines are to be used as reference and to assist the teacher and/or department in planning the curriculum for his/her school and to determine the content standards that students should meet upon completion of the course. Much emphasis has been placed on making the information “user friendly” so that the teacher with no or limited teaching experience, or little in the particular course area, will have access to information about specific course curriculum.

Tips for Using the Curriculum Guidelines and Grids

The grids have been designed to readily the content standards to be achieved, the performance expectations, the instructional strategies, the assessment strategies, and the supplementary resources for each course. Rather than show duplication of content in some courses, material has been placed in the course to which it best relates. However, material may be integrated into various courses if all courses are not offered in a particular school corporation (as many do not). Local department members may select content standard/performance expectations from the courses to include in the offerings that are available. Obviously, course offerings and content need to be adapted to meet the individual school’s, community’s, and students’ needs.

At the beginning of each course offering, the following information will be found:

- < *Course description*: contains information about the particular course including name, suggested grade levels, content, length, and credits
- < *Content standards*: competencies students should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the course
- < *Performance expectations*: actual tasks students should demonstrate to determine achievement of a particular competency
- < *ISTEP+ Language Arts and Math proficiencies*: competencies for these areas that students should develop through the particular course
- < *Grids*: tables displaying information about Content Standards, Performance Expectations, Instructional Strategies, Assessment Strategies, and Suggested Supplementary Resources

Explanation of Grids' Contents

The grids, perhaps, are the most important component for teachers and administrators alike. These are separated first by the specific course and secondly by Unit and Content Standard. An outline of the information contained in the grid is below:

- < *Course title:* state-approved course name
- < *Unit number and title:* units are not necessarily numbered according to the order in which they will be taught; many times they are arranged alphabetically
- < *Content standards:* competencies students should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the course
- < *Performance expectations:* actual tasks students should demonstrate to determine achievement of a particular competency
- < *Instructional strategies:* suggested activities that teachers may use to present the content standards to students
- < *Assessment strategies:* suggested materials/activities to assess a student's competencies in a particular content standard/performance indicator
- < *Supplementary resources:* suggested materials that might be used to prepare additional materials, to replace other projects, to provide students with additional reference materials, etc.

Many of the assessment activities and supplementary resources can be found in the various IDOE resource materials, such as mini-baskets, in-baskets, functional work station manuals, teacher's manual, etc., that have been developed in the past several years by Indiana teachers. A complete listing of these may be obtained from the Program Specialist for Business Marketing Education at IDOE. A fee may be charged for these materials.